

STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, September 24, 2003

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Gitmo translator accused of being a spy for Syria

Official denies link to airman charged with trying to pass on info about camp

BY MATT KELLEY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A military probe of possible security violations at the U.S. prison camp for terrorism suspects is expanding after the arrests of two members of the military, with a third military member under investigation, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

The cases have raised concern in the Defense Department about security at the base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, said Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"We don't presume that the two we know about is all there is to it," Pace told reporters Wednesday morning.

An Air Force translator and a Muslim Army chaplain at the prison camp have been arrested in the security probe.

Senior Airman Ahmad I. al-Halabi is behind bars at a California Air Force base, facing 32 criminal charges. The most serious — espionage and aiding the enemy — could carry the death penalty.

Pentagon officials said a broader investigation into possible security breaches at the Guantanamo Bay facility in Cuba was continuing. One suspect, a member of the Navy, is under investigation but has not been arrested, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

Military authorities accuse al-Halabi, 24, of sending e-mail with information about the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay "to unauthorized person or persons whom he, the accused, knew to be the enemy." The Air Force documents detailing the charges do not say who "the enemy" is.

Al-Halabi also is accused of planning to give classified information about the prisoners as well as more than 180 written messages from detainees to a person who would then go to Syria.

A military attorney representing al-Halabi, Air Force Maj. James E. Key III, denied the charges. Al-Halabi had been quickly promoted in the Air Force ranks and was named Airman of the Year at his base, Key said Wednesday.

"Airman al-Halabi's father testified at the hearing ... how much Airman al-Halabi loved the United States, how important being in America was to him," Key said. "They [his relatives] are shocked at the allegations he may have done something contrary to the United States' interests."

And in Damascus Wednesday, the Syrians denied that they had any links to the Air Force translator. Information Minister Ahmed al-Hassan said the accusations were without merit.

Al-Hassan spoke to reporters at an introductory meeting as he has just taken over the information portfolio in this month's Cabinet reshuffle. He did not know of al-Halabi's arrest in the

United States, but after the journalists told him about, he said: "How could Syria have a spy in Guantanamo?"

"Any allegations that al-Halabi has any kind of connection with Syria are baseless," al-Hassan said.

The Pentagon's disclosure Tuesday of the case against al-Halabi came three days after officials said a Muslim chaplain at the base had been arrested. The chaplain, Army Capt. Yousef Yee, has been held without charge since his Sept. 10 arrest.

The two men knew each other, an Air Force spokesman said, but officials said they didn't know whether there had been any conspiracy to breach security at the prison camp.

The charges against al-Halabi include an allegation that he failed to report unauthorized contacts between prisoners and other military personnel. The others were not identified.

Al-Halabi worked for nine months as an Arabic language translator at Guantanamo Bay, a job that ended shortly before his July 23 arrest as he arrived in Jacksonville, Fla., on a flight from the prison camp.

When he was arrested, al-Halabi was carrying two handwritten notes from detainees that al-Halabi intended to turn over to someone traveling to Syria, the charging documents say. He also was carrying his personal laptop computer containing classified information about detainees and 180 messages from detainees he intended to send to Syria or Qatar, it was alleged.

The documents also allege that al-Halabi lied to the Air Force by falsely claiming to have become a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2001. Al-Halabi, who joined the Air Force in January 2000, is Syrian.

Key said al-Halabi is a U.S. citizen but said he did not know when al-Halabi was naturalized.

Syria and the United States have normal diplomatic relations, although Syria is on the U.S. list of countries that are state sponsors of terrorism.

Secret documents al-Halabi is accused of trying to pass to Syria include details of flights to and from the Guantanamo Bay base; names, serial numbers and cell numbers of prisoners; a map of the base; and other military documents.

Al-Halabi is charged with eight counts related to espionage, three counts of aiding the enemy, 11 counts of disobeying a lawful order, nine counts of making a false official statement and one count of bank fraud. The bank fraud charge involves allegations al-Halabi used false information in credit card applications for several prominent banks.

About 660 suspected al-Qaida or Taliban members are imprisoned at the U.S. Navy base. American officials are interrogating them for information on the terrorist network.

All ears



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS/AP

Mr. Jeffries, a basset hound, displays the world's largest dog ears, as recognized by the 2004 Guinness Book of World Records. Mr. Jeffries, whose ears measure 11½ inches, lives with his owner, Phil Jeffries, in England. The dog's full name is Knightsfolle Ladiesman, and he is the grandson of Biggles, the face of Hush Puppies shoes. His ears are insured for \$47,800.

Bomb misses U.S. troops

BY STEVEN R. HURST

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A homemade bomb exploded Wednesday along a road in the Iraqi capital, missing a U.S. military patrol but killing at least one Iraqi and injuring 18 others as it destroyed two civilian buses, police and hospital officials said.

Also Wednesday, U.S. troops killed four Iraqis in two separate engagements near Saddam Hussein's hometown Tikrit and seized about 1,000 rounds of ammunition in a raid around the nearby village of Uja, where the ousted Iraqi leader was born.

In Mosul, meanwhile, a bomb exploded in a movie theater advertising foreign sex films, and witnesses said two people were killed and seven injured. Religious and political groups have warned cinema owners against showing such films after censorship ended following the collapse of Saddam's regime.

The Baghdad bombing took place in the Azamiyah district, a commercial and residential neighborhood in the north-central part of the capital. The American vehicles escaped damage but two buses were destroyed, according to Iraqi police Lt. Awad Ibrahim.

Hospital officials reported that five of the injured were in critical condition.

U.S. troops face a growing threat of attack by roadside bombs, most of them remotely controlled so that attackers can detonate them from a distance as convoys pass. Such devices — many of them unexploded — are discovered almost daily around this city of 5 million people.

In the Tikrit area, U.S. troops came under fire twice early Wednesday but

suffered no casualties, according to Maj. Josslyn Aberle, a spokeswoman for the 4th Infantry Division. U.S. troops called in an AC-130 gunship after seven Iraqis attacked an oil pumping station near Balad, just south of Tikrit. At least one Iraqi died when the gunship opened fire on his car.

Also near Balad, a U.S. patrol killed three Iraqis waiting in ambush with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades, the military said.

U.S. troops have been carrying out near-daily raids in the Tikrit area following a coordinated attack by Iraqi resistance fighters on Sept. 19 that killed three American soldiers. The raids have resulted in dozens of arrests and follow-up raids.

Also Wednesday, a Governing Council spokesman, Entifadh Qanbar, said council member Aquila al-Hashimi's condition had "deteriorated dramatically" after Saturday's assassination attempt and that doctors at a U.S. military hospital in Baghdad "are trying their best" to save her.

Later, a senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said al-Hashimi's condition was worsening, "although the latest reports are not as negative as they were early this morning."

Al-Hashimi, a career diplomat and member of a prominent Shiite Muslim family, had been preparing to leave for this week's U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York when she was ambushed.

Elsewhere, the Press Association, Britain's domestic news agency, reported that more than 200 British troops searched for weapons Wednesday in the southern Iraqi town of Tannuma. British officers said only a handful of weapons were found but they believed the operation was useful to remind Iraqis of the coalition presence.

Pentagon may call up more reservists

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon may be forced within several weeks to alert a large number of additional National Guard and Reserve troops for duty in Iraq, a senior general said Wednesday.

Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said more reservists could be called upon if other countries do not soon pledge thousands more troops to form a third multinational division in Iraq.

"We need to be making decisions about alerting reservists over the next four to six weeks," he said. "I would think that by around the end of October or the beginning of November, we should be alerting those forces that may need to be called up to relieve or be prepared to relieve [troops there now] if we don't have specificity by then on a third" multinational division.

He said the Guard and Reserve troops should be notified about four months before they would need to ship out because they require some training time.

When it announced a troop rotation plan in July, the Pentagon assumed that it would have available a third multinational division of 10,000 to 15,000 troops to replace the Army's 101st Airborne Division early next year.

Britain is leading one multinational division and Poland is leading another. Among nations mentioned as possibilities for a third division are Turkey, Pakistan, India and South Korea, but none has agreed to do so.

Pace said U.S. Central Command may determine if it can find enough active-duty troops to fill any gap next year. But he indicated that mobilizing more National Guard and Reserve troops was an option under active consideration.

"The entire population of the active force of the Marine Corps and the reserve force of the Marine Corps, and the Army and the National Guard and Reserves will be looked at" for possible duty, Pace said in an interview with a group of reporters at a Washington hotel.

Some in the military are concerned that reservists are being asked to shoulder too much of the burden.

In testimony Wednesday before the Senate Appropriations Committee, however, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said the Army has retained more than the usual number of National Guard and Reserve troops recently, although it faces "challenges" in recruiting more to join.

There are now about 130,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, including several thousand Guard and Reserve forces. Current plans call for mobilizing two National Guard brigades for duty in Iraq this fall.

The Pentagon had hoped that it would need to activate no National Guard units beyond that, but Pace said more could be alerted within weeks for possible deployment.

"What is not clear now ... is whether or not what we thought two months ago about the security environment [in Iraq] is still a valid projection, and then whether the coalition countries will or will not come up with a third division," he said.

"There are many countries out there talking about it, and we have every hope that that will happen," he said, "but hope is not a plan."

Nation

Water attraction: Weeki Wachee Springs, a pre-Disney Florida tourist attraction that debuted in 1947 and is known for its underwater mermaids, will stay open and try to make a comeback with needed repairs and new events.

The governing board of its landlord voted Tuesday to keep the 56-year-old park afloat, but the Southwest Florida Water Management District also wants frequent reports on the park's efforts to stay profitable. The water agency owns the land and leases the 27-acre attraction to the city of Weeki Wachee, about 35 miles north of Tampa.

California anti-spam law: California will prohibit Internet advertisers from sending unsolicited e-mails under the toughest law of its kind in the nation, providing for fines up to \$1 million.

In Sacramento, Gov. Gray Davis signed legislation Tuesday that targets not only the firms that package and send spam to consumers, but also the companies whose products and services are being advertised.

The measure covers all unsolicited commercial e-mail sent or received in California and imposes fines of up to \$1 million per incident.

Texas redistricting bill: A congressional redistricting bill has emerged from the Texas Senate for the first time after a bitter, months-long partisan battle that has seen Democratic lawmakers fleeing outside the state to thwart Republican quorums.

In Austin, the bill was tentatively approved 18-13 late Tuesday in the Senate, where lawmakers took up debate again Wednesday before giving it a final vote, required under Senate procedures. The House has approved its own redistricting bill and a conference committee will have to iron out differences.

Under the current map, Democrats have a 17-15 advantage in the Texas congressional delegation.

Chief shooting lawsuit: Tacoma, Wash., has agreed to pay \$3 million to the family of a woman who was shot to death by her police chief husband, and officials said the final package could total several million dollars more.

Lane and Patty Judson, the parents of Crystal Brame, said earlier this month that they would drop their initial wrongful death claim demand for \$75 million and accept whatever the city's insurance would cover — under certain conditions.

The conditions include the city taking responsibility for their daughter's death at the hands of Police Chief David Brame and establish an independent domestic violence counseling program for city employees.

David Brame shot his wife, then committed suicide on April 26 in a parking lot in front of their two young children. The couple had been going through a difficult divorce, and Crystal Brame had alleged that her husband abused her.

Without admitting responsibility for Brame's behavior, the council voted unanimously Tuesday to authorize the city manager and its lawyers to tell the Judsons that, "upon agreement regarding the family's nonmonetary demands," the city was willing to pay the \$3 million of its own money to settle the suit.

The city has liability insurance, but only to handle claims over \$3 million. In the Brame case, the council agreed to pay the \$3 million and authorized its lawyers to ask the city's insurers to commit to pay the limit of any applicable insurance. Additional payouts from the insurers could boost the settlement total to \$8 million or more, officials said.

Crematory operator: A former crematory operator accused of dumping decaying bodies around his family business pleaded not guilty Tuesday to some charges, but withheld pleas on most of the 787 counts against him.

Ray Brent Marsh, 29, pleaded not

News tracker: What's new with old news

guilty to 122 counts of burial service fraud and 47 counts of making false statements related to allegedly passing off dirt and cement dust as cremated remains.

Marsh's attorney Ken Poston said his client was withholding pleas on 179 counts of abuse of a body and 439 counts of theft by taking, describing those charges as "defective."

Spy suspect's wife sentenced: The wife of a man accused of secretly being an agent for North Korea was sentenced to one year of probation for failing to report \$18,000 that she and her husband carried into the United States from a trip to Europe.

Susan Youngja Yai, 51, of Santa Monica, Calif., also was ordered Monday by U.S. District Judge George King to pay a \$500 fine. She pleaded guilty in June to one count of failing to inform U.S. Customs that she and her husband transported more than \$10,000 into the country.

Sniper case witnesses: Three witnesses who placed sniper suspect John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo in the vicinity of two of last year's sniper shootings will be allowed to testify at Muhammad's upcoming trial, a judge ruled Tuesday.

Defense lawyers argued unsuccessfully that the witnesses' recollection was tainted by exposure to photographs of the pair subsequent to their arrest.

Military

Puerto Rico base: The United States will close its Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in eastern Puerto Rico within the next six months, the territory's congressional delegate said Tuesday.

Congress and President Bush are expected to sign off on the closure by the end of next week, said Anibal Acevedo Vila, the U.S. territory's nonvoting congressional delegate. The Pentagon did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

The base's closure comes after several years of protests against U.S. military exercises in Vieques, which ended with the Navy's May 1 withdrawal from its bombing range on that tiny outlying island.

Sailor sentenced: A Navy sailor who shoved a female shipmate out a Times Square hotel window last fall was sentenced Tuesday to 12 years in prison for manslaughter.

Petty Officer Brian Cooley, 29, admitted that he pushed Seaman Lisa Tedstone, 30, out a sixth-floor window on Oct. 5, 2002. They had checked into the room with a third sailor after a night out in New York.

Police have said Cooley was annoyed that Tedstone refused to sleep in his bed.

Cooley was assigned to the USS Wasp, which had docked in New Jersey after a deployment near Afghanistan.

Boeing deal endorsed: A widely criticized plan to lease 100 refueling tanker planes from the Boeing Co. should go forward even though it may end up costing billions of dollars more over the lifetimes of the planes, the Pentagon said in a letter released Tuesday.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said the leasing plan would allow the Air Force to modernize its tanker fleet immediately and save money in the short term.

World

Guinea-Bissau interim leaders named: Military chiefs who deposed Guinea-Bissau's president appointed a businessman with close ties to the Roman Catholic Church as interim president and named a contested political party leader as caretaker prime minister of the tiny West African country, news reports said.

Henrique Rosa, appointed to be head of state, and Artur Sanha, appointed to be premier, are to govern the former Portuguese colony until elections can

be held, though a military junta is to monitor their decisions and has warned it may intervene, the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported.

The junta has not set a date for elections.

War crimes cases dismissed: Belgium's highest court dismissed war crimes complaints Wednesday against former President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, ruling the country no longer can charge them.

Under international pressure, Parliament amended a 1993 law in August to require that human rights complaints could only be filed if the victim or suspect was a Belgian citizen or long-term resident at the time of the alleged crime.

The Bush administration had threatened to move NATO headquarters out of Belgium over the country's use of the law to file complaints against U.S. and other foreign leaders.

Germany headscarf trial: The state of Baden-Wuerttemberg cannot forbid a Muslim teacher from wearing a headscarf in the classroom under current laws, Germany's highest court ruled Wednesday in a case pitting the right to religious freedom against the right to an education with out religious influence.

The German Constitutional Court, however, effectively sent the issue back to the state legislatures — saying the state could ban headscarves in schools if it passed a new law.

The challenge was brought by Feresta Ludin, a 31-year-old German of Afghan origin, who had fought her way through Germany's court system since an elementary school in Baden-Wuerttemberg denied her a job in 1998 because she insisted on wearing the scarf while teaching.

Germany-Libya talks: Libya is in talks with Germany over compensation claims for a 1986 bombing in West Berlin that killed two U.S. soldiers and a Turkish woman and injured 229 others, a government official said Wednesday. The remark by Hans Martin Bury, a senior aide to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, was the first official word that the Berlin government is involved in negotiations for compensation from Libya. He gave no details.

Bury said chances of a settlement had improved since Libya last month accepted responsibility for the 1988 Pan Am bombing over Scotland that killed 270 people and agreed to pay \$2.7 billion in compensation to the victims' families.

China aims for more talks: China has been "working on" a possible next round of six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear program but wouldn't confirm Tuesday when — or even if — such a summit would take place.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said, however, that China would do its utmost to help arrange a second round of meetings.

Japan party merger: Japan's two largest opposition parties worked Tuesday to finalize a merger aimed at strengthening their chances against popular Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in parliamentary elections expected in November.

Senior officials were believed to be holding last-minute discussions on a plan under which the Democratic Party of Japan would absorb the smaller Liberal Party, said Hiromi Nakanishi, a spokesman for the Liberal Party.

Marcos travel: The Philippines' anti-graft court on Tuesday allowed dictator Ferdinand Marcos' widow, who is being tried on corruption charges, to travel abroad for eye treatment and a religious pilgrimage.

The Sandiganbayan court gave Imelda Marcos 30 days to travel to the United States for medical treatment. The court also agreed that Marcos, a Catholic, could take part in a pilgrimage to shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary in France, Portugal and Italy.

From wire reports

News from around the war

Fort Carson grieves for another

FORT CARSON, Colo. — It could be months before the Army decides whether to call Capt. Brian Faunce's death a combat fatality, but to his fellow soldiers, it won't matter.

"A dead soldier is a dead soldier," Sgt. Maj. Carlos Bassatt said.

"Every loss is a big loss. It doesn't matter how he died but that he died. And he died for us," said Bassatt, who knew Faunce well.

Faunce, 28, was injured Thursday when he touched a low-hanging power line while riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle near Asad, the Defense Department said. He was given first aid but died later at a military hospital.

Faunce was a member of the Fort Carson-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, one of three brigades in the 4th Infantry Division headquartered at Fort Hood, Texas.

He is the 19th Fort Carson soldier to die in Iraq since the war broke out.

L.A. Times correspondent dies

LOS ANGELES — Mark Fineman, an award-winning correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, died Tuesday of an apparent heart attack while on assignment in Iraq. He was 51.

Fineman was waiting with a colleague in the offices of the Iraqi Governing Council for an interview when he complained of chest pains and collapsed, Times staffers in Baghdad said. He was taken to a hospital but doctors could not revive him.

Fineman worked for the paper for 15 years.

He was based in Washington, D.C., and had recently arrived in Baghdad. He reported for the Times from the Philippines, India, Cyprus and Mexico City and had been the paper's Caribbean correspondent based in Florida.

Bush: Iraq shift won't be hurried

UNITED NATIONS — President Bush rejected calls from France and Germany for a swift transfer of power in Iraq on Tuesday, urging allies to put aside bitter divisions over the U.S.-led war and help lead a massive reconstruction effort.

French President Jacques Chirac challenged Bush by demanding a "realistic timetable" for granting sovereignty.

In the first gathering of world leaders at the General Assembly since the United States toppled Saddam Hussein, Bush was unapologetic about the war and its chaotic aftermath and unyielding on U.S. terms for creating a democratic government.

"This process must unfold according to the needs of Iraqis — neither hurried nor delayed by the wishes of other parties," Bush said, spurning demands of France and Germany in a replay of the acrimonious year-old debate over Iraq that has shaken old alliances.

Before Chirac took his turn at the microphone, Bush left the chamber, followed by Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. The French president upbraided the United States for having taken a go-it-alone approach in Iraq after the United Nations failed to sanction the war.

"In an open world," Chirac said, "no one can live in isolation, no one can act alone in the name of all, and no one can accept the anarchy of a society without rules." France has said it wants power handed over to the Iraqis in a matter of months — a position echoed by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on Tuesday.

Congress heats up over funding

WASHINGTON — There was a time when Iraq was almost a nonpartisan issue in Congress. That clearly ended when President Bush requested an additional \$87 billion for operations there and in Afghanistan. Now it's beyond political. It's nasty.

Sen. Ted Kennedy has called the war a fraud "made up in Texas," prompting a top Republican to accuse him of "hate speech." Iraq administrator L. Paul Bremer was said to have faced "a maelstrom" when he met with Democrats behind closed doors.

And 85-year-old Robert Byrd, a Democratic senator from West Virginia since the Eisenhower administration, complained that he had never been treated with such discourtesy as he had been at a hearing on Bush's spending request.

That was the environment awaiting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and two top generals who were scheduled to appear Wednesday before the Senate Appropriations Committee to defend Bush's spending request. Separately, Bremer was to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The mood was a striking change from last year. Bush was soaring in opinion polls, and, with midterm elections approaching, Democrats were wary about being seen as undermining him on national security issues so soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

After Bush's speech Tuesday at the United Nations, Daschle — now minority leader — said Bush "lost an opportunity" to make his case for more international troops and resources.

Lieberman — now a presidential candidate — said Bush's "11th-hour, halfhearted appeal to the United Nations, and his continuing I-told-you-so tone, have made it more difficult to secure international assistance."

Much has changed in a year. Opinion polls show rising doubts about Bush's Iraq policies. Lawmakers do not face re-election this year. And criticizing the aftermath of a war isn't as risky as criticizing the war itself.

Saudis kill 3 in shootout

JIZAN, Saudi Arabia — Shell casings littered the hallways and blood stained the floors at a hospital housing compound Wednesday, a day after Saudi security forces killed three suspected al-Qaida militants — including one sought by the FBI.

In a shootout that lasted for hours, security forces stormed the compound seeking five militants who had barricaded themselves inside the three-story building, which houses many foreign hospital workers in southern Saudi Arabia near the border with Yemen.

The Interior Ministry said one security officer died in the firefight, two militants were arrested and three were killed. One of them was Zubayr Al-Rimi, one of four men with alleged links to al-Qaida listed in a special FBI bulletin issued just before the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Al-Rimi, also known as Sultan Jubran Sultan al-Qahtani, lived near Jihan, in Asir. His body was identified by his father, the Saudi newspaper Al-Riyadh reported.

The FBI issued a bulletin Sept. 5 saying it was searching worldwide for al-Rimi, another Saudi, a Moroccan and a Tunisian in connection with possible terrorist threats against the United States.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, described al-Rimi as the chief deputy of Abu Bakr al-Azdi, the former top al-Qaida man in Saudi Arabia who surrendered to Saudi authorities on June 26.

Thai troops to Iraq

BANGKOK, Thailand — Thailand will send 422 troops to Iraq next week to aid in the country's postwar reconstruction, a military official said Wednesday.

They will be dispatched in two groups, on Sunday and Tuesday, for a six-month mission, said Capt. Ittipol Pinpong, a Thai military spokesman.

The Thais will be deployed around Karbala, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, and will be among 8,000 troops from 17 countries under the command of Poland.

They will help rebuild roads, buildings and utility infrastructure destroyed during the war.

Council bans access to Arab stations

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq's U.S.-appointed Governing Council barred journalists from two leading Arab satellite news channels from government buildings and press conferences.

The council said Tuesday that the two-week ban was imposed on Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya — two of the most popular television news stations in the Middle East — because it suspected the stations had violated rules that include not disclosing information about pending attacks on American troops.

A spokesman for Ahmad Chalabi, the current Governing Council president, accused the stations of "inciting violence" against U.S.-led coalition forces and Iraqi officials.

"We hope other channels will draw a lesson from this decision," spokesman Entifadh Qanbar said.

Al-Jazeera spokesman Jihad Ballout said the station regretted the council decision but "will continue our work as usual until we are officially notified" of it, according to Al-Jazeera's Web site.

Qanbar did not elaborate on what the two stations had done, and the council statement did not mention any specific allegations against the two Arabic broadcasters.

GIs detain AP photographer, driver

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. soldiers detained an Associated Press photographer and driver on Tuesday, handcuffing them, forcing them to stand in the sun for three hours and denying them water or use of a telephone.

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division, detained photographer Karim Kadim and driver Mohammed Abbas near Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, and kept their guns trained on them despite repeated attempts to explain they were journalists. Both Kadim and Abbas are Iraqis.

The troops were looking for explosives planted in the area.

"We identified ourselves from the very beginning as press, even before we approached the troops. I was asked not to take any pictures and I didn't. We were told to leave and we walked away, and then one of them shouted at us to come back," Kadim said.

An armored personnel carrier arrived moments later. Three soldiers disembarked and aimed their guns at the two men.

The two were made to stand for three hours in temperatures of 110 Fahrenheit.

Abbas said the soldiers accused them of participating in the insurgency attacking U.S. troops.

Intel: Taliban striking from Pakistan

GHAZNI, Afghanistan — Intercepted phone calls show Taliban commanders have been orchestrating deadly attacks here and in other parts of Afghanistan from a safe haven across the border in Pakistan, a senior Afghan intelligence official told The Associated Press.

The resurgent Taliban forces — who were chased from Afghanistan two years ago by the U.S.-led war — are getting protection from Islamic hard-line politicians and rogue elements of Pakistani security, Afghan and Western officials charge.

Ghazni province, southwest of Kabul, has been on the front lines of the recent violence, and many residents say the local government and security officials have been unable or unwilling to end the insurgency.

Pakistani officials strongly deny that the Taliban are receiving sanctuary in their territory.

Musharraf seeks Muslim force

NEW YORK — Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said Wednesday he wants to see a Muslim force cobbled together for Iraq that has the blessings of the United Nations or an international Islamic organization.

Troops from Muslim countries would diversify the U.S.-led Western force in Iraq.

Musharraf said the perception in Pakistan is that the United States is an occupation force in Iraq.

"It is important that our troops not be seen [in Pakistan] as part of an occupation force," he said.

"Everything is perception," Musharraf said, emphasizing that without at least a U.N. resolution it would be virtually impossible to persuade Pakistanis to support sending troops to Iraq.

Musharraf, who reversed his government's support for Afghanistan's hardline Taliban regime following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and became a U.S. ally in the war on terror, was talking to other leaders of Islamic countries Wednesday to try to reach a consensus on sending troops to Iraq.

Poll: Most glad to be rid of Saddam

WASHINGTON — Most residents of Baghdad say that ousting Saddam Hussein was worth the hardships they've endured since then, says a Gallup poll that shows they are divided on whether the country is worse off or better off than before the U.S. invasion.

Two-thirds, 67 percent, say they think that Iraq will be in better condition five years from now than it was before the U.S.-led invasion. Only 8 percent say they think it will be worse off.

But they're not convinced that Iraq is better off now — 47 percent said the country is worse off than before the invasion and 33 percent said it is better off.

The Gallup poll of 1,178 adults was conducted face to face in the respondents' household from Aug. 28 through Sept. 4 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The survey found that 62 percent think ousting Saddam was worth the hardships they have endured since the invasion. In the five months since coalition forces defeated Saddam and his armies, Iraq has faced continuing violence, electrical outages, job shortages and civil unrest.

Six in 10 said they have a favorable view of the new Iraqi Governing Council, but most see its priorities as set by coalition authorities. Half said the coalition authorities are doing a better job now than two months ago, while 14 percent said they were doing a worse job.

CIA analyzes Saddam tape

WASHINGTON — The CIA has been unable to authenticate the latest audio recording purportedly from Saddam Hussein, an agency official said Wednesday.

The quality of the recording, aired on Arab satellite television on Sept. 17, is too poor to make a final determination, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Officials said they had no other reason to doubt the authenticity of the tape, but said the technical analysis — in which the speaker's voice is compared to known recordings of Saddam — was inconclusive.

From wire reports

One complicated day at a time in Fallujah

Risks around every corner for 82nd soldiers

BY TERRY BOYD

Stars and Stripes

FALLUJAH, Iraq — Ghosts haunt Fallujah's nights. Enemies come close, but their faces are never seen. Danger lurks everywhere.

It is, in short, a horrible place to learn to fight this war. Yet that is the daily task of soldiers in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Friday night, in an open stretch of sand between a giant brickyard complex and a residential area, about 35 soldiers from the 82nd sat invisible in the dark.

The soldiers searched the rooftops of two houses for snipers. Only a football field away, people talked and children played, utterly unaware.

At 6:51 p.m., the soldiers had left Forward Operating Base Mercury and headed about three miles north to scout out Fallujah Construction Materials Co., which U.S. soldiers suspect is a base and weapons stash for insurgents.

Minutes later — right at sunset — someone took a potshot at the convoy as it made its way along the north side of the brickyard. As soldiers hunkered down behind their Humvees trying to pinpoint the source, there was more shooting.

"Just another Friday night in Fallujah, fellas," a soldier said as he dashed for cover.

As the darkness deepened, troops used infrared scopes and light-amplifying goggles to scope out people on the roof of a house. The soldiers weren't close enough to be absolutely certain the people were armed.

The soldiers welcomed the gathering dusk. "Daytime raids are not the 82nd style," a soldier said in a whisper. "We like to work at night, on foot."

With only five days of "boots on the ground," Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division is learning what Fallujah is all about.

Everything is up to them. In Iraq, each soldier is left to define "the mission," "the enemy" and even "success."

"We're not here to do big-picture diplomacy, the change-the-world thing," said 2nd Lt. Jim Ball, platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Company B. "We're here to make it safer."

If they can accomplish that, they'll be the first. Saddam Hussein was scared to come to Fallujah, locals say. And since major combat operations ended May 1, things have only gotten worse.

The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment lost at least three soldiers in August and early September before it handed over responsibility on Sept. 15 to the 82nd.

On one of its first patrols, the 82nd was involved in a murky incident, during which its members killed eight Iraqis in an accidental shootout.

Two days later, one of their own, Spc. Trevor A. Blumberg, was killed by an explosive device.

Now the 82nd is racing to figure everything out — the terrain, the social dynamics, the enemy's strengths and weaknesses — without losing more people.

It's not easy. On night patrols, Humvees get stuck in uncharted gullies. Radios don't always work. Soldiers trying to recuperate from endless hours in the heat and dust have to go right back into battle rattle when cries of "incoming!" ring out.

Things are toughest after sunset. Explosions, mortars and small-arms fire are nightly events.

Just after 9 p.m. on Sept. 17, eight mortars hit Dreamland, one of three 82nd bases within two miles of one another. No soldiers were injured.

By the next day, stopping the mortars had been added to Company B's already lengthy to-do list. Intel indicated those rounds probably came from Fallujah Construction Materials, and Ball got the job of doing a preliminary reconnoiter.

Three Iraqis at the front gate looked on indifferently as 34 soldiers jammed into seven Humvees to probe warehouses and outbuildings. They found nothing in a quick search, but Ball suspected it is a jackpot waiting to be hit. His instincts were dead-on.

The following day, scouts returned to the brickyard and shot it out with five Iraqis, wounding one, then collected 20 people for questioning. They found weapons, but a white Toyota pickup got away.

The Fallujah brickyard is one tiny corner of the Mercury-based units' area of responsibility.

Before Ball's initial reconnoiter at the brickyard, his men had put in a full day. Just minutes out of the gate, Staff Sgt. Michael Onstine spotted the barrel of a recoilless rifle in a load of scrap pulled by a tractor.

The patrol stopped two men to verify that the load was really scrap and not a load of weapons, then let the men go.

This is, Onstine said, what light infantry does best. "We're down on the street with the population," not riding around in Bradleys and tanks, he said.

A half-hour later, soldiers were cruising a swatch of villages running along the Nahr Al-Karmah River, starting with the main village of Qaryat Albu Awadah.

As he scanned the horizon for shooters, Sgt. Scott Palmer was in awe of the greenery along the river, a setting he called "biblical."

Beautiful, yes. Dangerous? You bet.

"This is no place for a pacifist to be," he muttered while keeping his M-4 on the lush tree line.

Then, the mission abruptly turned into a walking tour, a meet-and-greet with village elders.

Through a translator, Ball's pitch was consistent.

"We know people have been firing mortars out of the cement plant," he said. "Can you help us get rid of the bad guys?"

Surprisingly, village men don't hesitate to greet the young lieutenant, shaking his hand and chatting. Not surprisingly, they tell him nothing.

Iraq is worlds away from Fort Bragg, N.C., where the 82nd polishes the infinite facets of war fighting, from organizing ambushes to clearing buildings.

"That's what we know," Ball said.

Here, his men meet-and-greet, investigate and collect intel.

The funny thing, he said, is that if the locals would just let the United States get on with the job of rebuilding, they'd be rid of his troops sooner rather than later.

"I don't think a lot of them understand that we'd rather be home with our families," Ball said.

"If they stopped attacking us and let us rebuild the infrastructure in peace, we'd be out of here tomorrow."

"And we'd all be a lot happier."

E-mail Terry Boyd at
boydt@mail.estripes.osd.mil

R&R for Iraq troops

It's official: Troops in Iraq can start taking vacation.

The new "Rest and Recuperation" policy, which kicked off this week, gives a majority of the estimated 130,000 troops deployed to Iraq a chance to get away from the combat zone.

Troops on 12-month orders will be able to use 15 days of their annual leave for vacation, excluding travel time to airports in either Frankfurt, Germany, or Baltimore, Md. They will fly from airfields either in Mosul or Baghdad to Kuwait, and then hop a flight to Rhein Main Air Base in Germany.

From there, troops who want to return to the United States will be flown on a military flight to Baltimore-Washington International Airport, on the government's dime. From there, they're on their own, said Maj. Pete Mitchell, a spokesman with U.S. Central Command.

Troops deployed to Afghanistan have been able to take advantage of a similar program for the past seven months, Mitchell said. Troops deployed for more than 180 days in Afghanistan are eligible to take annual leave during that deployment. There's no guarantee it will be 15 days, and the vacation time is up to unit commanders.

In Iraq, each brigade will get, at first, 15 slots per day, increasing to 20 slots. Priority will be given to troops with illnesses, family issues or emergencies, or pregnant female members. Some units are letting lower enlisted troops go first, then senior noncommissioned officers. Some are letting those who arrived first go home first.

The U.S. Air Mobility Command has added aircraft to fly in and out of the theater specifically for the program, Mitchell said.

The program is still in its infancy and officials are taking it slow, Mitchell said. At first, as many as 270 troops will leave a day, with the number growing to about 800 a day in a month or two.

From staff reports

GIs help rebuild orphanages, schools, hospitals

BY LISA HOFFMAN

Scripps Howard

U.S. reservists from a Denver-based combat engineer battalion have adopted a small village in northern Iraq, where — on their own time — they are building playground equipment and restoring an irrigation well.

Army engineers from Fort Lewis, Wash., have resurrected a water-treatment plant in Al Zaqiyyah, freeing Iraqis there from the scourge of dysentery. Soldiers from Abilene, Texas, have rebuilt a dilapidated school near Ar Ramadi, and off-duty sailors from Corpus Christi, Texas, made mini-picnic tables for the children of Umm Qasr.

Elsewhere, American troops are volunteering to fix up orphanages, schools and hospitals, and even kicking in cash from their own pockets to buy refrigerators, stoves and beds for needy Iraqis.

Far from the headlines about the U.S. military mission in Iraq, American GIs are daily making these sorts of contributions to help mend Iraq, both from the ravages of combat but also from a decade of neglect while the country was under U.N. economic sanctions to punish Saddam Hussein.

"There are more than 5,000 different projects that our troops have done while at the same time they are trying to bring security to Iraq," Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard Myers said recently. "Every day they go beyond what is asked of them to find new ways to make things better."

Accounts of these efforts can be found on U.S. military internet sites, which some critics might dismiss as puffery or propaganda, or little more

than a drop in the bucket to slake the needs of Iraqis.

But the soldiers quoted in these stories uniformly cite their participation in these projects as the most satisfying, if least heralded, part of their duty in Iraq.

"Americans who disagree with what we are doing might understand how much we are helping this country and its people," Army Pfc. Amber Bryant, a 1st Armored Division medic in Baghdad, said in a recent Army Web Site story. "Maybe not today or tomorrow, but someday, people will see the change we made."

A sampling of a few of the projects conceived and carried out by U.S. troops:

■ A battalion of the Army's 101st Airborne Division is hooking up the folks back home in America with Iraqi villages, organizing an "adopt-a-village" campaign for sending "care" packages of school supplies, sports equipment, toiletry items and canned food. So far, the 426th Forward Support Battalion has signed up the city of Salem, Utah, several Minnesota residents and a Tennessee car dealership to help two villages.

■ An Army reservist with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion from Green Bay, Wis., dreamed up the "Backpacks for Iraq" project, which aims to ship 2,000 donated packs filled with school supplies given by people in Wisconsin and elsewhere. So far, the soldier has distributed 120 packs, with another semi-trailer truckload on the way.

■ The Combined Joint Task Force-Seven started a "Beanies for Baghdad" program, delivering more than 7,000 Beanie Babies and 1,000 classroom items to Baghdad neighborhoods and children's hospital wards.

■ The Army Reserve's 171st Area

Support Group in An Nasiriyah in southern Iraq collected money from its soldiers to buy stoves, refrigerators, fans, televisions and kitchen tables and chairs for three orphanages, which the troops have taken under their wing, in a city where fierce fighting raged during the initial days of the war.

■ The Army's 244th Engineer Combat Battalion from Denver has dedicated itself to fixing up the Al Saqour village, population 1,244, near Tikrit in northern Iraq. Soldiers have volunteered once or twice a week to do everything from hauling away rubble and leveling a soccer field to building playground equipment, repairing bicycles and treating minor medical maladies.

■ Soldiers from the Army's 490th Civil Affairs Battalion from Abilene, along with others from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, have rebuilt a school from the ground up in a village outside Ar Ramadi — adding a new roof, a bathroom, water tanks, fans, windows and chalkboards.

■ Naval Coastal Warfare sailors delivered 200 packages of school supplies — after a San Diego church donated \$800 to ship them — to poor children in the southern Iraq port city of Umm Qasr. On their own time, sailors with the Inshore Boat Unit 15 from Corpus Christi constructed 16 child-sized picnic tables, using scrap lumber from war material.

■ Seabees from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4, based in Port Huene, Calif., supervised a wholesale renovation of a girls' high school in Najaf in south-central Iraq. The school now has freshly painted rooms and new electrical wiring, lighting, ceiling fans and bathrooms. The \$72,000 needed for the project came from funds confiscated from Saddam's Baath Party.

CIA: New report on Iraq weapons likely to draw no conclusion

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The CIA's top weapons-hunter in Iraq is not expected to reach any conclusions on Iraq's alleged weapons programs in his upcoming report, an agency spokesman said Wednesday.

David Kay, who is preparing an initial report on U.S. efforts to find weapons of mass destruction alleged to have been held by Saddam Hussein's government, will present his findings to CIA Director George J. Tenet and other officials soon.

"Dr. Kay is still receiving information from the field, and this will be just the first progress report, an interim report, and we expect it will reach no firm conclusions, nor will it rule anything in or out," said CIA spokesman Bill Harlow.

The spokesman said it has not been determined how much, if any, of Kay's report would be made public. He said the CIA is not commenting on the report's contents. After the report is complete, Kay is expected to return to Iraq to continue his investigation.

Bush administration officials in recent days had sought to lower expectations that Kay's report would put to rest ongoing questions about Iraq's alleged weapons programs. U.S. and British officials have not revealed any discoveries that would validate most of their prewar assertions about Iraq's supposed weapons programs.

"I await the report eagerly from Mr. Kay as does the international community," said British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday. "I'm not going to comment on drafts I may have or haven't seen. What we are looking for is published reports and they will be made available in due course and the work of the Iraq Survey Group will go beyond any reports."

Iraq's alleged weapons programs were the key justification to invade the country and depose the government of President Saddam Hussein.

But the apparent failure to uncover widespread chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs — or actual chemical and biological weapons — has led critics to suggest the administration's case for war was faulty or exaggerated.

Senator renews call for hiring change

WASHINGTON — Sen. Charles Schumer criticized Pentagon leaders Tuesday for what he said was a failure to take a close look at those it hires to be Muslim imams in the military, months after he raised warnings and asked for an investigation.

Schumer's criticism follows the arrest earlier this month of Army Muslim chaplain Capt. Yousef Yee, who ministered at the U.S. military's prison for suspected terrorists in Guantanamo, Cuba, and Tuesday's announcement that.

Yee is being held at a military brig as investigators try to determine if he misused classified documents.

Pentagon officials said Tuesday an Air Force enlistee man was being held for possibly misusing classified information.

Schumer, D-N.Y., first requested an investigation from the Defense Department in March to look into the groups that the military uses to endorse clerics.

The senator called it "painful and baffling that there appear to be security breaches" where dangerous suspects are held, and said he would press the Pentagon for a top-to-bottom review of security at Guantanamo.

Schumer complained Tuesday that the organization that gave the military Yee's ecclesiastical endorsement, the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veterans Association, is a subgroup of the American Muslim Foundation. That group has been investigated by customs agents for possible financial ties to terrorists.

"I fully support the teaching and worship of Islam in the military but I think it's common sense to ensure the groups in charge of vetting people don't have links to terrorism, and are fundamentally pluralistic," said Schumer. He faulted the Defense Department's Inspector General for not taking action on the issue despite his six-months-old request.

The U.S. Army has faced a similar problem before. Former Sgt. Ali Mohamed helped teach Green Berets about Muslim society, then joined up with Osama bin Laden to train terror cells and raise money for terror groups.

Mohamed, an Egyptian who became a U.S. citizen, pleaded guilty in 2000 to training terrorists and bin Laden's security detail.

From The Associated Press

Air Force expands survey to all

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Air Force is preparing to begin its 2003 Air Force Climate Survey by expanding its potential audience to include all of the more than 700,000 individuals who get paychecks from the service.

When the Air Force began its Climate Survey in 2002 by separating work-related issues from its Quality of Life survey, the new questionnaire included only active-duty airmen and appropriated-fund civilians — an audience of some 420,000 people, Lori Marcum, the survey's team leader, said in a Monday telephone interview.

This year, survey officials at the Air Force's Manpower and Innovation Agency at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, also want to hear from the Reserve, Guard, nonappropriated fund civilians and students in a temporary-duty status, adding more than 300,000 potential takers to the poll's roster, Marcum said.

The point of the survey is, Marcum said: "To give everyone [in the Air Force] a voice in targeting areas for improvement and creating positive changes."

The survey will run from Oct. 1 to Nov. 23. It covers 13 different categories, all of which are designed to measure a person's satisfaction with his or her job.

The survey will include about 100 questions on resources, core values, leadership, supervision, training and development, teamwork, participation and involvement, recognition, unit flexibility, general satisfaction, unit performance outcomes and job enhancement, she said.

The survey uses a scale of one to six, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." There is also an optional section for poll takers' comments.

Officials estimate completing the survey will take about 30 minutes.

The survey will be available at <https://afclimatesurvey.af.mil>, which will have no restrictions prohibiting access from outside the work place, because "some people might want to take it at home," Marcum said.

Survey officials are also supplying the survey on disks and Local Area Networks, so that commanders in the Reserve or Guard, or whose units are deployed, can install the query on an available computer, she said.

Results will be released in February, Marcum said. Commanders down to the squadron level will have the chance to see how their workers rate their workplace, and unit members can see the results of their own surveys.

But because the survey "is not a report card or a witch hunt," commanders and unit members may only receive a report for the unit to which they are currently assigned, Marcum said.

Air Force-wide tabulations, however, will be available to all survey-takers.

Wing, group, squadron and flight commanders use the results to gauge and improve working conditions, said Tech. Sgt. Gregory Fisher of Yokota's 374th Airlift Wing, manpower and organization office.

"It lets leaders know how members perceive their working environment," he said.

Information-masking software ensures confidentiality, said 2nd Lt. Ryan Hudson, installation point-of-contact for this year's survey. The multiple-choice format also includes comment boxes for in-depth feedback.

For more information on the survey, go to <https://afclimatesurvey.af.mil>. The survey won't be posted on the site until Oct. 1. Jennifer Swan contributed to this report. E-mail her at: svanj@pstripes.osd.mil
E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@stripes.osd.mil

Yokosuka ships in China

ZHANJIANG, China — Two Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan-based ships are making port calls here this week.

USS Cowpens and USS Vandegrift docked Monday morning at Zhanjiang, headquarters for the Chinese navy's South Sea Fleet, the Kyodo News service reported. The ships will remain four or five days.

The port calls are the most recent in a series of exchanges designed to improve U.S.-Chinese military relations, the news service reported.

Earlier this year, U.S. ships visited Shanghai and Qingdao, the news service reported. Chinese ships are slated to visit Guam later this year.

Hawaii fire called suspicious

HONOLULU — Officials are calling a Sunday fire that destroyed part of the abandoned Fort Ruger Cannon Club suspicious.

According to the Honolulu Advertiser, 30 percent of the building was damaged along with the Kahala entrance.

The club, once a popular gathering place for soldiers stationed in Hawaii after World War II and the Korean War, closed in June 1997 after 52 years, the newspaper reported.

Since power had long since been shut off, fire officials declared the 3 a.m. blaze suspicious, the newspaper said.

Honoring author Ambrose

MIDLAND, Texas — Author and historian Stephen Ambrose, who died in October, will be honored by the Commemorative Air Force as part of this weekend's "Airshow 2003" at Midland International Airport.

In recognition of Ambrose's commitment to tell the story of World War II, a bronze sculpture of a B-24 will be dedicated in his name.

Ambrose's best-selling books included "D-Day June 6, 1944: The Climactic of World War II" and "Band of Brothers." He founded the D-Day Museum in New Orleans and served as a historical consultant on Steven Spielberg's movie "Saving Private Ryan."

The Commemorative Air Force's B-29 Superfortress "Fifi" and B-24 Liberator "Diamond Lil" will recognize Ambrose with a special flyover. In all, the air show will feature more than 100 World War II airplanes as well as the Canadian Forces Snowbirds.

Document extends secrecy on Area 51

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Invoking national security, President Bush has renewed an exemption allowing the Air Force to keep mum about top-secret operations at a southern Nevada base.

Bush's memorandum said it was of "paramount in-

terest" to exempt the Groom Lake base about 90 miles north of Las Vegas from disclosing classified information.

Also known as Area 51, the mysterious base sits on a dry lake bed and is heavily patrolled. The area is in a no-fly zone.

The secrecy has fueled speculation about UFOs, aliens and other strange occurrences around Area 51. Residents of the nearby town of Rachel say the UFO talk began years ago when a Nevada Test Site worker claimed he saw alien ships there.

The government has acknowledged the existence of the installation but has not disclosed what it does there, further fueling the UFO lore.

The state got in the act in 1996, officially naming a 98-mile stretch of state Route 375, which runs through Rachel, the Extraterrestrial Highway and erecting green highway signs with images of spaceships.

Military jets cited in injuries

TULSA, Okla. — An American Airlines jetliner with 91 people aboard had to make a steep descent to avoid fighter planes, and three flight attendants and two passengers were slightly injured, the airline said Wednesday.

The MD-80 was en route from Oklahoma City to St. Louis when the plane's collision alarm went off Tuesday at 29,000 feet, airline spokeswoman Julia Bishop-Cross said.

"The pilot took the plane off autopilot, the system went off again and ordered a descent," she said. After the pilot descended, he "saw three or four jet fighters, military aircraft."

She said the pilot estimated the drop at 50 to 100 feet.

The maneuver initially felt like turbulence, said passenger Billy Jack Charrick. Then, he said, "I got coffee on me and I am on the roof of the airplane."

The flight continued to St. Louis.

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating, said spokesman Roland Herwig. He said he had not confirmed that military planes were involved.

Next Army vice chief of staff

WASHINGTON — President Bush nominated Lt. Gen. George W. Casey Jr. for promotion to the rank of general and to become the Army's next vice chief of staff, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

The nomination is subject to Senate confirmation. Casey has been director of the Joint Staff since January, replacing Gen. John Abizaid, who left to become a deputy commander of U.S. Central Command. Abizaid is now head of Central Command.

Casey will succeed Gen. John Keane, who is retiring after more than four years as Army vice chief of staff. Keane also was acting chief of staff after Gen. Eric Shinseki retired in June.

From staff and wire reports

Nine NASA safety panel members resign

BY PAUL RECER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A serious accident is waiting to happen on the International Space Station due to poor communications between American and Russian engineers, says one of the nine members of a NASA safety panel who resigned Tuesday.

There have been three separate incidents that could have led to accidents aboard the space station, and all were linked to a lack of coordination between the Russians and Americans who operate the orbiting lab, said Arthur Zygierbaum, a former member of NASA's Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel.

Zygierbaum said safety flaws on the space station are being brushed aside in the same way NASA ignored problems with foam insulation on the space shuttle.

A suitcase-sized chunk of foam insulation that flew off a fuel tank during the launch of Columbia is blamed for breaking a heat shield and causing the loss of the space shuttle and seven astronauts.

"We think we see a trend on the space station that is as significant as the foam," said Zygierbaum. "We have had three incidences of miscommunications or different purposes between the Russians and the Americans that have endangered the space station."

Zygierbaum said the panel resigned after receiving sharp criticism from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board and from the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The board members unanimously voted last week to resign, he said, because it was felt NASA administrator Sean O'Keefe needed to reconstitute the ASAP so it was more independent and adequately funded.

"We decided the professional thing for us to do was to resign to give O'Keefe the flexibility he needed to reconstitute the panel," Zygierbaum said.

O'Keefe said in a statement, "We need to take this opportunity to explore how the original concept for an Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel needs to evolve to best meet the future needs of the agency."

The ASAP was established by Congress after the 1967 Apollo 1 fire, which killed three astronauts.

The Columbia Accident Investigation Board report last month said the ASAP lacked influence in NASA's top ranks. A report from the Senate Appropriations Committee said the ASAP was "asleep" and failed to notice dangerous issues in NASA that the Columbia board spotted.

"Many of the cultural issues identified by the CAIB are in our annual reports" but were ignored, said Zygierbaum. "That underscores our lack of influence."

Zygierbaum said the Senate committee report "basically said that we were culpable for the death of seven people [on Columbia]. That is a hard thing to take."

He said the safety panel did miss the significance of foam insulation being shed during the launch of the space shuttle, "but so did every other advisory board.... The foam has been falling off since the first flight."

Now, he's fearful that the tendency to not spot dangerous trends is continuing in the International Space Station.

Zygierbaum said there was confusion last week in signals between the Americans and Russians, causing a dangerous reaction on the space station.

He said the station's position in space can be controlled either by firing rockets on a docked Russian cargo ship, called the Progress, or by using gyroscopes, or reaction control wheels, to twist the orbiting lab.

"Last week, the signal was sent too early to the Progress to fire the thrusters [rockets] and the reaction wheels fought that move," Zygierbaum said. The gyroscopes, working against the rockets, were driven to their limit, seriously endangering the control devices.

Teen shot in Wash. school intended suicide, police say

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS

The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — A troubled teenager who was critically wounded by officers after he fired a gun at school was trying to commit suicide, police said Tuesday.

Sean Fitzpatrick, 16, left a page-and-a-half suicide note at home before Monday's shooting, saying he wanted to be shot by police, police Chief Roger Bragdon said. He also made suicidal statements during the 20 minutes he talked with a police negotiator, Bragdon said.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the young man intended to commit suicide by having us do it," Bragdon said. "He was talking suicide from the very beginning."

Bragdon declined to reveal the contents of the note, saying only the teen was explicit about his emotional pain and depression.

Bragdon could not say why the student

chose his high school for the showdown.

Fitzpatrick was shot three times by SWAT team officers who fired almost simultaneously when the student raised a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun toward them, Bragdon said. Fitzpatrick was shot in the jaw, stomach and arm and was in critical condition Tuesday at Sacred Heart Medical Center.

Bragdon said the suicide note was clear Fitzpatrick did not intend to harm others.

The gun was obtained from the boy's home, he said.

Fitzpatrick's parents, Angel Fitzpatrick and Linda Scheering of Fairfield, a town 30 miles south of Spokane, were brought to the school but had not spoken to their son, officials said.

The parents apologized to the community Tuesday in a statement released by family attorney Carl Hueber. The boy had no previous criminal problems, and his parents were cooperating with police, Hueber said in the statement.

"He was apparently suffering from severe mental problems which had not

been recognized by his family, friends or teachers," the statement said.

Bragdon said Fitzpatrick entered a science classroom shortly after 11 a.m. Monday, ordered a student teacher and several students to leave and fired once into a wall. He took no hostages.

The boy also sprayed the room with retardant from fire extinguishers. Officers could see the boy because he had propped open a door, and they talked with him, Bragdon said.

However, Fitzpatrick suddenly stopped talking, put on his jacket, and drew the pistol from a pants pocket, Bragdon said.

"They knew it couldn't be stopped," Bragdon said of the shooting.

Authorities said it is too early to say if Fitzpatrick will face criminal charges if he recovers.

School Superintendent Brian Benzel cited privacy laws in refusing to release any information about Fitzpatrick's school performance and activities.

Crisis counselors were on hand Tuesday morning as about 2,000 students returned to classes.

FTC list called a reach

OKLAHOMA CITY — A federal judge has ruled that the Federal Trade Commission overstepped its authority in creating the national "do-not-call" list against telemarketers.

The ruling came in a lawsuit brought by telemarketers who challenged the list of 50.6 million numbers submitted by people who do not want to receive business solicitation calls.

The immediate impact of Tuesday's ruling by U.S. District Judge Lee R. West was not clear. He did not issue an order directing an action by the FTC. The list was to go into effect Oct. 1.

The judge said the main issue in the case was "whether the FTC had the authority to promulgate a national do-not-call registry. The court finds it did not."

In 1994, Congress enacted the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act that directed the FTC to "prescribe rules prohibiting deceptive ... and other abusive telemarketing acts."

But the judge said Congress gave the Federal Communications Commission, not the FTC, the authority to operate "a single national database to compile a list of telephone numbers of residential subscribers who object to receiving telephone solicitations."

City, police dismissed in photo lawsuit

SALINA, Kan. — Police officers and the city of Salina have been dismissed from a lawsuit filed by a woman interrogated last year about photos processed at a Wal-Mart store that included partially nude images of her 3-year-old daughter.

In the lawsuit, Tamie Dragone claims she was humiliated and her family's privacy was invaded when police called by store officials questioned her about the photos, which included a picture of her daughter playing topless in a swimming pool.

Dragone was approached by police as she waited for the photos to be developed and was questioned for about 45 minutes. She was eventually allowed to leave, but without the pictures.

Dragone is seeking damages of \$262,473 for medical expenses and pain and suffering.

Attorneys for both sides agreed to dismiss the city defendants. Dragone's attorney, Tom Boone, said Tuesday that the suit contends negligence by Wal-Mart caused the incident.

Wal-Mart lawyers have moved for dismissal of claims against the retailer, saying the photos could have led a reasonable person to conclude the child was being sexually abused.

A shining example of philanthropy

PITTSBURGH — Just as he's done for more than two decades, Albert Lexie gets out of bed at 5 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday, takes two buses to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and makes his rounds — offering shoe shines for \$3.

Also every Tuesday, Lexie goes to an office building about three blocks from the hospital and hands over his weekly do-

nation — shoeshine tips, gifts from customers and contributions — to the hospital's Free Care Fund.

Lexie's efforts make about \$10,000 every year, and he's donated more than \$89,000 since February 1981 to the fund, which helps pay for medical care to pediatric patients regardless of their families' ability to pay.

As his donations grew, officials invited him to shine shoes in the hospital. Last month, the hospital honored Lexie by giving him a custom-made cart to replace the 30-pound box he still occasionally lugs around the sprawling building.

Some felons' voting rights restored

Nearly a half-million ex-cons have regained their voting rights since 1996 as eight states eased their restrictions on felons, an advocacy group says in a new study.

Despite the changes, an estimated 4 million citizens remain barred from voting because they are in prison for felonies or have felony records, according to The Sentencing Project, a Washington-based group that seeks alternatives to incarceration.

"Americans have traditionally believed that once you paid your debt to society, you're free to rejoin the community. This clearly conflicts with that," said Marc Mauer of The Sentencing Project.

Changes have meant that at least 471,000 former prison inmates have had their voting rights restored, according to an analysis cited by the project.

Some conservatives said the push to let felons vote is misguided.

"People who violate the rights of others and have harmed others should still be excluded," said David Muhlhausen, a senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation.

The Sentencing Project is part of a larger campaign involving civil rights organizations and advocacy groups for the poor. They are seeking to press states to ease restrictions on felons, emphasizing the harm that prohibitions do to the black community.

Overall, about 13 percent of all black men are barred from voting because of such laws.

Two boys shot at high school; one dies

COLD SPRING, Minn. — A freshman opened fire at a central Minnesota high school Wednesday, killing one student and critically wounding a second, authorities said.

The suspect was taken into custody after the late morning shooting at Rocori High School.

Police Chief Phil Jones said "there was chaos" as police arrived at the school. One of the students was shot in the school's weight room and the other was shot in the gym.

One of the wounded boys died and the other was critically injured, Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said.

Jones said the investigation was still under way, but that it appeared a well-respected, veteran teacher and coach talked the suspect into surrendering a small-caliber gun. When police arrived, the boy was in the custody of the school's staff in an administrative office, he said.

Authorities would not identify the two students who were shot except to say they were a senior and a freshman. The suspect also is a freshman.

From wire reports

BASEBALL

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Detroit Tigers outfielder Bobby Higginson was suspended for two games and fined by the commissioner's office for throwing equipment that hit an umpire during a game against Toronto on Sept. 16.

FOOTBALL

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Suspended Ohio State tailback Maurice Clarett sued the NFL, asking a judge to throw out a league rule that prevents him from entering the 2004 draft.

The lawsuit contends the NFL rule prohibiting players from being drafted until they have been out of high school for three years violates antitrust law and harms competition.

Clarett wants U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin to declare him eligible for the 2004 draft — or require the NFL to hold a special supplemental draft sooner. Under current rules, he is not eligible for the draft until 2005.

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority said it had reached an agreement with the New York Giants on renovations to Giants Stadium, a move officials hope will bolster the state's chances of hosting the Super Bowl in 2008.

Improvements to the stadium are widely viewed as necessary for the NFL to consider selecting New Jersey as the site of what would be the first outdoor Super Bowl in a cold weather city. John K. Mara, the Giants executive

Sports in brief

vice president and chief operating officer, said the renovations are contingent on the NFL's financing at least half the project under a league program that loans teams up to \$150 million for stadium upgrades.

ST. LOUIS — St. Louis Rams running back Marshall Faulk will have surgery Wednesday to repair cartilage in his right knee. He already was expected to miss four to six weeks after breaking two broken bones in his left hand Sunday. The knee surgery will not cause him to miss any additional time.

BASKETBALL

DENVER — Prosecutors in the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case asked a judge to keep next month's preliminary hearing open, joining news organizations that contend the public has a right to know.

District Attorney Mark Hurlbert told Judge Frederick Gannett in court papers that the evidence to be presented during the Oct. 9 hearing would not threaten Bryant's right to a fair trial.

Separately, the defense again asked the judge to force Bryant's accuser to testify at the hearing — a request prosecutors have opposed. They say the accuser's testimony is unnecessary.

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — Rebecca Lobo retired after seven years in the WNBA. The 29-year-old Lobo spent last season

with the Connecticut Sun. In college, she led UConn to its first national championship in 1995. She was one of the WNBA's original players in 1997, initially assigned to the New York Liberty.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A judge plans to dismiss most of Mike Price's \$20 million lawsuit over his firing as Alabama's football coach, a job he lost over claims of drunken behavior in Florida.

Ruling during a hearing, U.S. District Judge Scott Coogler said the University of Alabama and its trustees were immune from being sued over Price's dismissal last spring.

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — William & Mary canceled this weekend's home opener against Maine, saying it had continuing concerns about the safety of its campus in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel and was disinclined to find an alternative site.

William & Mary said it was unable to reschedule the game for later in the season because the Tribe and the Black Bears both finish the regular season on Nov. 22, the week before the NCAA Division I-AA playoffs begin.

OLYMPICS

ATLANTA — Montreal Expos manager Frank Robinson was selected to man-

age the U.S. baseball team that will try to qualify for the Athens Olympics.

Robinson will handle a professional team that is scheduled to begin training in the Arizona Fall League on Oct. 4. The qualifying event will be held in Panama City, Panama from Oct. 30-Nov. 11.

SOCCER

DENVER — Kroenke Sports Enterprises said it purchased the Colorado Rapids from Phil Anschutz's sports group and plans to build a new stadium for the Major League Soccer team.

Terms of the sale were not disclosed. Kroenke already owns three other teams, including the NHL's Colorado Avalanche and the NBA's Denver Nuggets. Kroenke officials said they will immediately begin a search for a site for the soccer-specific stadium, which it hopes to have built by 2006.

TRACK AND FIELD

PARIS — French middle distance runner Fouad Chouki failed a drug test at the World Championships and could face a two-year suspension.

Chouki, the eighth-place finisher in the 1,500 meters at the worlds, tested positive for the performance enhancer EPO. Jean Gracia, the director general of the French Athletics Federation, said.

Chouki will have a hearing with the FFA on Oct. 8, and could receive a two-year suspension and miss the 2004 Athens Olympics.

From The Associated Press

Hamas: Group will not disarm or accept a truce

The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — The leader of Hamas said Wednesday his group will not disarm or accept a truce, undercutting efforts by the incoming Palestinian prime minister to negotiate a cease-fire with Israel without confronting the militants.

Sheik Ahmed Yassin delivered his challenge to Prime Minister-designate Ahmed Qureia in his first high-profile appearance, a news conference at a Gaza City mosque, since Israel tried to kill the Hamas leader in a Sept. 6 air strike.

A group of 27 Israeli reserve air force pilots, meanwhile, signed a petition stating that they would no longer agree to carry out air strikes against Palestinians. They called the attacks illegal and immoral.

The military had no immediate comment on the petition, an unprecedented protest from pilots. Dozens of reserve soldiers in ground forces have opted to go to prison rather than serve in the West Bank and Gaza, reflecting growing Israeli unease with the protracted conflict.

Israel has marked Hamas leaders for death, and killed 13 members of the group, as well as seven bystanders, in air attacks in the past month.

Yassin also lashed out at the United

States, saying President Bush "declared war on Islam" and that America will be defeated by Muslims.

Without Hamas' tacit cooperation, Qureia could have trouble carrying out his agenda. Like predecessor Mahmoud Abbas, the incoming prime minister has said a truce is a top priority and a prerequisite for progress on a U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan.

Qureia has complained in recent days about the "chaos of weapons" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but has not said how he would collect illegal weapons, as required by the "road map."

Palestinian officials have said they would not use force and have suggested that militants be persuaded to disarm voluntarily or, as a minimum, to stop flaunting their weapons in demonstrations.

Yassin said Wednesday that Hamas would not surrender its weapons. "The weapons that our people carry to defend our land and our people, and nobody can confiscate them," he told a news conference at the Al-Mujamma Al-Islami Mosque near his Gaza City home. "We can talk about this only after liberating the land. Taking weapons means surrender and defeat."

About a dozen Hamas security guards mingled with journalists and Hamas supporters in the mosque, and

several more armed guards patrolled outside.

The setting reflected Hamas' growing concerns for the safety of its leaders.

The mosque was presumably considered immune to Israeli attack because of religious sensitivities. Yassin was not flanked by senior Hamas officials, as would have been customary in the past, apparently to reduce the risk.

Yassin also said Hamas would not agree to a truce with Israel; a unilateral cease-fire declared by Hamas and other militants June 29 collapsed in a burst of violence several weeks later.

"There is no place to talk about a truce because the enemy is continuing his aggression, killing and settlement activities," Yassin said, adding that "he who carries a bomb and blows himself up" is destined for paradise, referring to suicide attackers who have killed hundreds of Israelis.

In other developments Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said a large-scale swap of prisoners with Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas is closer than ever, but will still require the approval of the Israeli Cabinet.

Sharon said Israel will not release Palestinian uprising leader Marwan Barghout in the emerging deal, and that Israel will insist on DNA testing of three bodies of Israeli soldiers that are to be handed over.

Second suspect held

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — In a stunning about-face Wednesday, police freed one suspect and arrested another in the stabbing death of Foreign Minister Anna Lindh.

While investigators released few details, saying only their evidence was the strongest yet, some experts were convinced police, under increasing pressure from the media and public, may have found the man responsible for stabbing Lindh to death two weeks ago.

"They've solved the murder. I'm pretty sure they have," said Leif G.W. Persson, a professor of criminology at the National Police Board. "They've solved Lindh."

Although Persson isn't part of the investigation, he said police had given him information about the second suspect that indicated he was likely the killer. He declined to elaborate.

The board is the central administrative authority for Sweden's police.

Police didn't comment on Persson's claim, saying only that the new suspect, who wasn't identified, was arrested without incident Wednesday morning in Stockholm.

"We have stronger suspicions against this suspect than the previous one, but we're not releasing any details," police spokesman Lars Groen-skog said.

From The Associated Press

Bennifer sighting in Ga.

Just because **Ben Affleck** and **Jennifer Lopez** aren't doing much of anything doesn't mean they're not making news.

Hollywood's most overexposed couple set gossip pages aflame anew on Tuesday after they popped into a south Georgia courthouse near Affleck's **Hampton Island** home.

But apparently it was a gun license, not a marriage license, that the on-again, off-again super couple was seeking Monday.

Wedding bells

Grammy-winning singer **Melissa Etheridge** exchanged vows with her girlfriend, actress **Tammy Lynn Michaels**, in a weekend ceremony in **Malibu, Calif.**, the singer's publicist said.

The statement described the two as married, although homosexual couples cannot legally marry in California.

Etheridge, 42, and Michaels, the 28-year-old star of TV's "Popular," met two years ago. They live in Southern California with Etheridge's daughter and son.

Faces 'n' places

Family feud

The son of **Gerard Depardieu** says his movie star father is a chronic liar obsessed with money and status, taking their public airing of grievances to a new level.

"Gerard Depardieu is a coward, a cheater and lazy," 32-year-old **Guillaume Depardieu** said in an interview published in Sunday's *Le Parisien* newspaper. "He's the only person I know who lies to his own analyst."

The comments came in response to an interview published in last week's *Paris Match* magazine, where the elder Depardieu said he was no longer on speaking terms with his son.

Celebrating Celia

Latin Grammy nominee **Victor Manuelle** sang while hundreds danced in a tribute to "Queen of Salsa" **Celia Cruz** during halftime of an NFL game between **Miami** and **Buffalo**.

Cruz's husband, **Pedro Knight**, received a **Dolphins** jersey during Sunday night's ceremony in Miami.

Cruz, 77, died of a brain tumor on July 16. The Cuban exile was immensely popular in Miami, so much so that **Calle Ocho** — the main street running through the city's Cuban community — has the honorary name of Celia Cruz Way.

Wedded bliss

For those wondering if trouble lurks in the marriage of soccer star **David Beckham** and his pop star wife, **Victoria**, the couple says not to worry.

"Contrary to newspaper reports, our marriage is not in crisis," they said Sunday in a statement issued by their management company. "Since we first met, our careers have always meant we have spent time apart. This is not a reflection on the strength of our marriage and we are very much enjoying our new life in Spain."

The *News of the World* newspaper said Beckham's transfer to **Real Madrid** from **Manchester United** had strained the relationship because his wife doesn't want to live in Spain full time.

From The Associated Press

Cubs 6, Reds 0

CINCINNATI — Kerry Wood struck out 12 and limited Cincinnati to one infield single in seven innings Tuesday, leading Chicago to a victory and sole possession of first place in the National League Central.

The Houston Astros dropped a game back with a loss to San Francisco. The Cubs had not been alone in first place so late in a season since 1989, the last time they won a division title.

The Reds couldn't even get a ball out of the infield through the first six innings as Wood (14-11) didn't come close to giving up a hit. He walked Russell Branyan with one out in the seventh, and Willy Mo Pena broke up the no-hit bid with an infield single.

Kyle Farnsworth and Mike Remlinger completed the two-hitter.

Wood set a career high for victories and leads the majors with 266 strikeouts.

Aramis Ramirez led Chicago's offense with a solo homer and RBI single off right-hander Scott Randall (2-4), a nine-year minor leaguer who was making his first big league start.

Giants 10, Astros 3

HOUSTON — Edgardo Alfonzo hit a grand slam in a 10-run second inning as San Francisco knocked Houston out of first place in the NL Central.

The Giants roughed up Wade Miller (14-13) and sent the Astros to their fourth consecutive loss. Houston had held at least a share of the division lead since Sept. 8.

Jason Schmidt (17-5) benefited from all the San Francisco offense. The right-hander, slated to start Game 1 of the playoffs for the NL West champion Giants, gave up only two runs and three hits in seven innings.

He has won five straight decisions and 12 of his past 14.

The Giants lead Atlanta by two percentage points in the race for the best record in the NL and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

Marlins 5, Phillies 4

MIAMI — Jeff Conine's three-run homer off Kevin Millwood highlighted a five-run seventh inning as Florida rallied to beat fading Philadelphia.

The Marlins overcame a shaky start by rookie Dontrelle Willis.

They were on the verge of falling into a tie with Philadelphia in the wild-card race, but instead moved two games

National League

ahead with five to go — including two more between the teams.

The second game of the three-game series is Wednesday, with Brett Myers (14-8) scheduled to pitch against the Marlins' Josh Beckett (8-8).

Jimmy Rollins' two-run double in the second put the Phillies ahead, and they were up 3-0 when Florida rallied in the seventh.

Luis Castillo's RBI single put Florida ahead, and Michael Tejera (3-3) got the victory. Ugueth Urbina pitched a perfect ninth for his fourth save with Florida — he also had 26 for Texas this season.

Mike Williams (1-7) took the loss.

Braves 2, Expos 0

ATLANTA — John Smoltz got his first save since coming off the disabled list after Rafael Furcal's two-out single in the eighth inning broke a scoreless tie as Atlanta defeated Montreal.

Gary Sheffield added a run-scoring double off Javier Vazquez (13-12), who dominated the Braves for seven innings before tiring in the eighth. Sheffield has 128 RBIs, breaking the Atlanta record held since 1966 by Hank Aaron.

But the most encouraging performance for the Braves was turned in by Smoltz, who missed nearly a month because of tendinitis in his right elbow. The closer pitched for the second night in a row, striking out all three batters in the ninth for his 45th save in 48 chances — and first since Aug. 23.

Shane Reynolds threw seven scoreless innings before Jarret Wright (2-5) earned the victory by working the eighth, his first victory since being claimed off waivers by the Braves on Aug. 29.

Cardinals 5, Brewers 1

MILWAUKEE — Woody Williams mastered Milwaukee for the second time in a week as St. Louis beat the Brewers.

The Cardinals stayed 3½ games behind Chicago in the NL Central race with four left. They snapped a five-game road losing streak.

Williams (17-9) scattered three hits over seven innings, walking none and striking out six as the Cardinals improved to 12-3 against Milwaukee.

Mike Matheny hit a two-run homer off Ben Sheets (11-13).

Mets 1, Pirates 0

NEW YORK — Al Leiter pitched his first complete game in slightly more than a year and Tony Clark drove in the only run as New York broke an eight-game losing streak with a victory over Pittsburgh.

The Mets had lost 16 of 17 games. It was Leiter's 10th career shutout and his 16th complete game.

Leiter (15-9) allowed eight hits, struck out six and walked one.

Tony Clark drove in Mike Piazza, who singled, with a double in the fourth inning off Pirates starter Kip Wells (9-9).

Rockies 20, Diamondbacks 9

DENVER — Ronnie Belliard homered twice and drove in a career-high eight runs, and Larry Walker hit a grand slam and had six RBIs as Colorado eliminated Arizona from postseason contention.

The loss, coupled with Florida's 5-4 victory over Philadelphia, put the Diamondbacks six games behind Florida in the NL wild-card race with five remaining.

Belliard's eight RBIs matched the Colorado record, shared by Andres Galaraga and Walker. The 20 runs set a Rockies mark — they scored 19 twice before. It was the most runs ever scored against Arizona.

The Diamondbacks got a two-run homer from Raul Mondesi.

Colorado's Darren Oliver (13-11) allowed four runs in five innings. Brandon Webb (10-8) gave up 10 runs — six earned — in four innings.

Dodgers 2, Padres 1

SAN DIEGO — Alex Cora doubled home the go-ahead run in the ninth inning to lift Los Angeles over San Diego.

Adrian Beltre homered and Eric Gagne got another save for the Dodgers, who remained 3½ games behind Florida in the NL wild-card race with six to play.

Cora doubled off Rod Beck (3-2) with one out in the ninth, scoring Jeromy Burnitz from first base. Los Angeles won for just the third time in eight games since sweeping the Padres at home Sept. 12-14.

Tom Martin (1-2) pitched a perfect eighth inning and Gagne got three straight outs in the ninth for his 54th save this season and his major league-record 62nd in succession dating to last year.

From The Associated Press

Scores/standings**American League**

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-New York	98	59	.624	—
Boston	93	64	.592	5
Toronto	82	75	.522	16
Baltimore	69	87	.442	28½
Tampa Bay	61	96	.389	37
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	88	69	.561	—
Chicago	82	75	.522	6
Kansas City	82	75	.522	6
Cleveland	67	91	.424	21½
Detroit	39	118	.248	49
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Oakland	95	63	.601	—
Seattle	90	68	.570	5
Anaheim	74	84	.468	21
Texas	70	88	.443	25

Tuesday's games

Boston 6, Baltimore 5, 10 innings
Toronto 8, Tampa Bay 5
Minnesota 4, Cleveland 1
Detroit 15, Kansas City 6
N.Y. Yankees 7, Chicago White Sox 0
Anaheim 2, Seattle 1, 11 innings
Oakland 4, Texas 3, 10 innings

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Atlanta	98	60	.620	—
Florida	87	70	.554	10½
Philadelphia	85	72	.541	12½
Montreal	81	77	.513	17
New York	64	92	.410	33
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	85	72	.541	—
Houston	84	73	.535	1
St. Louis	82	76	.519	3½
Pittsburgh	73	84	.465	12
Cincinnati	67	90	.427	18
Milwaukee	66	91	.420	19
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Francisco	97	59	.622	—
Los Angeles	83	73	.532	14
Arizona	81	76	.516	16½
Colorado	72	85	.459	25½
San Diego	62	95	.395	35½

Tuesday's games

Florida 5, Philadelphia 4
N.Y. Mets 1, Pittsburgh 0
Chicago Cubs 6, Cincinnati 0
Atlanta 2, Montreal 0
St. Louis 5, Milwaukee 1
San Francisco 10, Houston 3
Colorado 20, Arizona 9
Los Angeles 2, San Diego 1

From The Associated Press

Yankees 7, White Sox 0

CHICAGO — Jason Giambi hit a grand slam in the ninth inning, and Jose Contreras struck out a career-high nine Tuesday as New York clinched its sixth straight American League East title with a victory over Chicago.

Nick Johnson and Juan Rivera hit solo homers, and Hideki Matsui drove in his team-high 106th RBI for the Yankees, who last Saturday assured themselves of no worse than the wild-card berth.

Chicago was eliminated from contention with the loss, its ninth in 13 games.

Contreras (7-2) allowed four hits in eight innings to beat Mark Buehrle (14-14), who gave up two runs and eight hits in seven innings.

Athletics 4, Rangers 3 (10)

OAKLAND, Calif. — Oakland clinched its second straight AL West title behind Adam Melhuse's RBI single in the 10th off Texas pitcher Francisco Cordero (5-8), who blew his league-high 10th save.

Oakland wrapped up the division about 20 minutes later when second-place Seattle lost 2-1 in 11 innings at Anaheim. The A's will be going to the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year.

Jermaine Dye had driven in the tying run for Oakland with a double in the ninth after Todd Greene's solo homer off closer Keith Foulke (9-1) in the top of the inning put Texas ahead 3-2.

Twins 4, Indians 1

MINNEAPOLIS — Cristian Guzman went 2-for-2 with a homer and two runs as Minnesota clinched its sec-

American League

ond straight AL Central title by beating Cleveland for its 10th consecutive victory.

Kenny Rogers (13-8) came within one out of a shutout, allowing a two-out RBI single to Josh Bard. Eddie Guardado finished for his 40th save.

Shannon Stewart drove in two runs.

Minnesota, 7½ games out at the All-Star break, had to wait 30 minutes after the game to celebrate. The Twins' title wasn't ensured until Chicago and Kansas City both lost and were eliminated.

Jake Westbrook (7-10) gave up four runs — three earned — and six hits in seven innings.

Red Sox 6, Orioles 5 (10)

BOSTON — Todd Walker tied the game with a three-run homer off Jorge Julio with two outs in the ninth and David Ortiz won it for Boston with a solo shot against Baltimore's Kurt Ainsworth (0-1) in the 10th.

South Korea's Byung-Hyun Kim (8-5) earned the victory with a scoreless 10th. Boston began the night 2½ games ahead of Seattle in the AL wild-card race.

Blue Jays 8, Devil Rays 5

TORONTO — Carlos Delgado hit his 299th homer, breaking a 4-all tie in the fifth against Victor Zambrano (11-10), and Reed Johnson added a two-run shot as Toronto beat Tampa Bay.

Josh Towers became the second straight Toronto pitcher to be ejected, getting tossed for throwing be-

hind Aubrey Huff in the fifth. Roy Halladay was ejected for hitting Rocco Baldelli with a pitch Monday.

Delgado gave Toronto a 5-4 lead in the bottom half of the fifth with a solo shot off Victor Zambrano (11-10).

Jason Kershner (3-3) allowed one run and three hits in 3½ innings.

Angels 2, Mariners 1 (11)

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Tim Salmon homered off former teammate Shigetoshi Hasegawa (2-4) in the 11th inning as Anaheim eliminated Seattle from the AL West.

Randy Winn had tied the score in the ninth with an RBI single off Troy Percival.

Francisco Rodriguez (8-3) pitched a hitless 11th for the victory.

Tigers 15, Royals 6

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Warren Morris, Craig Monroe and A.J. Hinch all homered as Detroit (39-118) stopped a 10-game losing streak with a victory over Kansas City.

The Tigers, who scored their most runs since getting 19 against Texas on Aug. 8, 2001, must still win four of its last five games to avoid tying the post-1900 loss record of 120 held by the 1962 New York Mets.

Tigers manager Alan Trammell missed the game to attend his mother's funeral.

Mike Maroth (8-21) gave up six runs on 10 hits in five innings.

Jose Lima (8-2) gave up seven runs and 10 hits in 3½ innings.

From The Associated Press